FROM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TO RELATIONAL ONTOLOGY: THE RADICAL POSSIBILITIES OF FANONIAN HUMANISM

by

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ABSTRACT

In my paper, I go back to Frantz Fanon as an important founding figure of postcolonial theory in order to argue for the relevance of paying more attention to the existential-phenomenological and humanistic elements of his thought. I situate Edward Said and Homi Bhabha as important theorists of discourse analysis, which I define as a linguistic and epistemological approach to the effects of colonialism on the colonized. I use Aimé Césaire's poetry and thought as a framing device, and utilize Sylvia Wynter's thought as a way of bridging discourse analysis with the existential-phenomenological side of Fanon in order to argue for an anticolonial humanism that locates the effects of and criticizes colonialism on the basis of the ontological question of the definition of what it means to be human. My research suggests that discourse analysis already finds itself in the midst of important ontological questions, but that these remain implicit to such an extent that they need to be more explicitly brought to the foreground. On the other hand, I argue that as Fanon radicalizes and renews various elements of European philosophy such as existential-phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and Marxism in order to more fully respond to a specifically anticolonial context, so does his work point towards a radicalized humanism that transcends the European context of that term. Ultimately, my thesis suggests that a Fanonian humanistic critique of colonialism points towards the creative, narrative based, and always-a-bit-more-than-contextual elements of human existence that colonial violence seeks to deny but has not yet been able to completely destroy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Frantz Fanon's thought has been and continues to be immensely influential in various branches of what is broadly conceived of as postcolonial studies. Though various aspects of his work have been seminal in the development of postcolonial theorizing, and though we are currently in the midst of a resurgence of scholarly interest in his work, there has not yet been sufficient attention paid to his call for an anticolonial form of humanism. Part of the reason for this is that certain areas of postcolonial theory need some tweaking and recalibration before they can fully engage with this call. In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Ania Loomba argues that while postcolonial theory is extremely "heterogenous" and "riddled with contradictions" (5,32), we can still locate general currents of how postcolonial theorists have attempted to think through the implications of colonialism in politics, history, literature, and many other areas. She suggests that at the roots of postcolonial theory is a struggle to combine the liberatory historical analyses of Marxism with the nuance of poststructuralist concerns about language and the contingency of the human subject. She places Fanon's relationship to this theory as merely one of attempting to stretch Marxism in order to account for race, an attempt that was later made in more nuanced ways by theorists like Homi Bhabha and

Edward Said who engage with poststructuralist insights in their discourse analysis.[1] This leaves out the important influence of existential-phenomenology[2] on Fanon, and

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[1] In tracing postcolonial theory from Marxism to discourse analysis, Loomba begins with Fanon's complex relationship with Marxism. She then moves right through Gramsci to Althusser to Foucault and poststructuralism, leaving out both the existential-phenomenology and the existential forms of Marxism so important to Fanon. This does provide a good genealogy of Bhabha and Said, however, her definition of discourse analysis being that it "...makes it possible to trace connections between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalized, ideas and institutions. It allows us to see how power works, through language, literature, culture and the institutions which regulate our daily lives" (63). My engagement with discourse analysis in this paper mirrors (and owes an immense debt to) Alex Weheliye's use of the critical resources of black studies to critique and expand the concepts of biopolitics and bare life in Foucault and Agamben in his extremely important and insightful *Habeus Viscus*.

[2] The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines phenomenology as "the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions." The method of the first official practitioner of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, is to bracket all other considerations other than intentional phenomena in order to attain a rigorous scientific knowledge of them, and in doing so posit a transcendental ego which constructs the world around it. The existential mode of phenomenology moves away from the early transcendental form in order to engage with lived experience and the impossibility of definitively separating being from knowing (Flynn 23, but cf. also the clear and insightful definitions of existential-phenomenology as well as other branches of phenomenology at http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/orientations-in-phenomenology/existential-phenomenology/). Not all phenomenologists are existentialists, and not all existentialists are phenomenologists, but since figures that influenced Fanon like Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir, and Sartre were both, and because the intersection of these terms applies to Fanon's project, I will maintain the use of existential-phenomenology throughout this paper. For all intents and purposes the way I use this term in the contexts of this study is covered well by Lewis Gordon in his *Existentia Africana*, when he says that existential thinking is not limited to Europe, but rather "...we can regard philosophies of existence...as philosophical questions premised upon concerns of freedom, anguish, responsibility, embodied agency, sociality, and liberation. Philosophies of existence are marked by a centering of what is often known as the situation of questioning or inquiry itself. Another term for situation is the lived context of concern. Implicit in the existential demand for a recognizing the situation or

specifically how he thought through the ontological question of the human in such a way as to prefigure and go beyond many of the later findings of the discourse analysts. Indeed, this account ignores how Fanon expanded upon not only Marxism but existential-phenomenology in order to articulate the contours of an anticolonial humanism that can stretch out and radicalize discourse analysis in a manner that maintains both liberatory focus and theoretical rigor. A good way to address this occlusion is through the work of Jamaican writer and theorists Sylvia Wynter, who though at times is simplistically referred to as a poststructuralist herself, carries on the Fanonian existential phenomenological project of locating and resisting colonial definitions of the human. Both Fanon and Wynter are part of the vibrant Carribean intellectual history, which includes Fanon's fellow Martiniquean Aimé Césaire, poet and thinker whose influence on Bhabha and Said but even more important influence on Fanon and Wynter casts a definitive shadow over this paper. Indeed, in his seminal work *Discourse on Colonialism*, Césaire sets the tone for anticolonialism when he observes that "at the very time when it most often mouths the word, the West has never been further from being able to live a true humanism – a humanism made to the measure of the world"(22). In other words, Europe has failed to live up to its own humanistic potential and its own projects. This indictment against European hypocrisy had a profound influence on Fanon's project in which he locates the violence and racism of colonialism while arguing for maintaining a place for a radically altered humanism. Because Wynter continues this project in such an epistemologically rich way, Wynter is a crucial catalyst in bringing the ontological and ethical questions of the human (which, following her lead, I will refer to as "relational

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lived context of Africana peoples being-in-the-world is the question of value raised by the people who live that situation"(10).

ontology" in a way that includes ontology and ethics together) to bear on the epistemological and poststructuralist influenced theories of Bhabha and Said. The broadly construed existential-phenomenological problematic of being and knowing allows us to situate Fanonian humanism in the contexts of the interrelatedness of epistemology and relational ontology.[3]

In this paper, I first describe how Wynter engages with and goes beyond the radical Caribbean tradition to explicitly link epistemology to ontology in a way that productively allows Fanon's combined ontological-epistemological project to engage the more epistemologically minded discourse analysis of Bhabha and Said. I use this framework to discuss three of Fanon's major works; the roots of a new humanism

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[3] Part of what makes Fanon and Wynter's engagement with the idea of the human so capable of shifting the emphases of discourse analysis is the deeply linguistic nature of the way they define humanity. There is a great deal of theorizing in existential-phenomenology as well as hermeneutics that informs the conception of the linguisticality of the human subject that is operating in my paper, but for reasons of space I must limit this specific discussion to a brief note. Heidegger, Sartre, and Gadamer among others talk about the human as essentially linguistic and semiotic in important ways. The clearest exposition of this position, which is related to my later discussion of contextualization of freedom (as well as my combined discussion of Césaire, Wynter, and Said), comes in Sartre's *Search for a Metho*d, in which he says "Man[sic] is, for himself and for others, a signifying being, since one can never understand the slightest of his gestures without going beyond the pure present and explaining it by the future. Furthermore, he is a creator of signs to the degree that—always ahead of himself—he employs certain objects to designate other absent or future objects. But both operations are reduced to a pure and simple surpassing. To surpass present conditions toward their later change and to surpass the present object toward an absence are one and the same thing. Man constructs signs because in his very reality he is signifying; and he is signifying because he is a dialectical surpassing of all that is simply given. What we call freedom is the irreducibility of the cultural order to the natural order"(152). For my purposes here suffice it to say that this linguisticality and narrativity of the human are European elements which Fanon and Wynter put to much fuller use in their radical appropriation of them in a colonial context, and that they give more concrete instantiation to how the freedom of the colonized is denied through the colonial attempt to collapse the cultural into the biological/natural.

through a stretched radicalized reading of European philosophy in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the existential-phenomenological framing of emergent anticolonial humanism in *A Dying Colonialism*, and the full call for said humanism in *The Wretched of the Earth*. I devote most of the space to *A Dying Colonialism* because it is here that Fanon most concretely details how new beings and modes of knowing are struggled for and created in interlocking ways. I then discuss how both Bhabha and the early Said in different ways present the colonized as a passive recipient of the identity that colonial discourse forces upon them. I argue that an important way to understand what is lacking in both thinkers is that they discuss the processes and institutions of knowing without sufficient attention to the ontological and ethical issues that are also at stake. Part of the process of opening up discourse analysis to Fanonian humanism is showing the ways in which Bhabha's appropriation of Fanon into his own analysis misses the political and historical importance of the latter's thought, but that there are still places where Bhabha begins to open his thought to a more radical Fanonian reading. Through Wynter and Fanon, we can expand Bhabha to suggest that his formulation of colonial discourse as haunted by the contingencies of colonial reality needs to be open to how this haunting happens because of human agents struggling against colonial knowledge and the material power that upholds it. On similar grounds, we can deepen Said's epistemological formulation of Western discourses about the Orient to flesh out the ontologically specific struggles for a full definition of humanity. Furthermore, Said's own formulation of a non-Eurocentric humanism overlaps with Fanonian anticolonial humanism in a manner beneficial to them both, and in a way that allows me to defend both of them from charges of being historically regressive and redundantly banal. I combine Said and Wynter's

interpretations of Césaire's call for a nonprovincialist way of telling history and a "new science of the word" as a promising example of how Fanonian humanism can be articulated through new narratives that are sensitive to humans as dynamic and impossible to reduce to any abstraction. This transitions into my conclusion in which I tie together the threads of my argument with specific focus on how they are connected with Césaire's poetic text *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, illustrating how his literary account of subject and community formation in the face of colonial history gestures towards how language and ontology are intimately linked. Freed from the corpse-begetting-corpse of colonial forms of knowledge and life, thought and narrative begin to point towards forms of life and knowing that lie beyond the borders and histories of structural violence. Breaking down the rigidities of colonial epistemologies in order to open up space for more truly ethical relations between humans brings with it the contours of new anticolonial epistemologies as well. Fanonian humanism responds to radically new contexts in radically new ways, not in a negation of history, but as a new perspective in terms of more relational and deeply rational modes of human existence.

WYNTER: COLONIAL MAN AND THE HUMAN SPECIES

Playwright, novelist, literary critic, and essayist, Sylvia Wynter is an immensely important theorist whose work has been influential in black studies, Africana and Caribbean studies, and amongst Latin American theorists of colonialism who work with the concept of the "coloniality of power." While most of her voluminous writings appear scattered through various journals, the recent publication of the collection of essays *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* along with other recent theoretical works by scholars influenced by Wynter like *Demonic Grounds*, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, and the above-mentioned *Habeas Viscus* are evidence of the current consolidation of interest in her work across various fields of thought. Her work has yet to receive the attention it deserves in other areas of postcolonial theory, however, and because she makes important epistemological engagements with Fanon's thought and shows its direct relevance to the textualist analyses of Bhabha and Said, this can be shown to be a most unfortunate lacuna high past time for rectifying. As the title of collection of essays mentioned above indicates, the heart of Wynter's theorizing is the idea that colonial disregard for the epistemologies of the colonizers is intimately linked with the valorization of a specific mode of being human, to the detriment of anything that falls outside of those parameters. Wynter suggests that the hegemonic Western idea of Man is

overrepresented as the standard of being for the entire human race (262).[4] This performs an epistemological blockage that has deadly systemic and existential results. The colonial system violently maps living people onto a discursive abstraction that is not even empirically attainable by those in power. It is certainly not attainable by the marginalized, whose heightened vulnerability and limited access to basic resources are naturalized by the constant maintenance of power in favor of the colonial definition of Man.

Furthermore, in dialogue with the radical tradition of Caribbean writers and thinkers that includes Césaire and Fanon,[5] Wynter expands upon Fanon's concept of sociogeny in order to theorize about new knowledge discourses that speak to the existential realities of humans rather than the ossified and ossifying discourses of coloniality. According to Fanon, while both "the history of an individual organism (ontogenesis) [and] the development at the level of species (phylogeny)" (Weheliye 25) are important, "there is also sociogeny....Society, unlike biochemical processes, does not escape human influence" and it is humans themselves that bring society into being

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[4] Perhaps the most succinct summary of the Wynterian definition of "Man" is Weheliye's: "I use Man to designate the modern, secular, and Western version of the human that differentiates full humans from not-quite-humans and nonhumans on the basis of biology and economics."(139)

[5] Carole Boyce Davies' comments on Caribbean thought are here extremely useful, "the creative/theoretical split, often assigned to writers in the Western canon, is perhaps less useful when we begin to evaluate some of the writers who come out of the Carribean region and whose 'theoretical work is intimately connected to the imaginative.' In addition to Sylvia Wynter… we can therefore automatically identify NourbeSe Phillip, Derek Walcott, George Lamming, C.L.R. James, Erna Brodber, Kamau Brathwaite, Aimé Césaire, and Edouard Glissant as some of the most recognizable black thinkers who enmesh the theoretical and the imaginative" (205). Wynter is part of a vast African diasporic dialogue that is engaged from a variety of angles in making sense out of how colonial modernity grew out of the horrendous violence perpetrated in the Caribbean slave plantation system and the capitalist world network intimately connected to it.

(quoted in Weheliye 26). Wynter continues this project of thinking through the sociogenic principle by thinking the human against the ossified and ossifying discourses of Western coloniality. Her approach "differs markedly from arguments that seek to include the oppressed within the already existing strictures of liberal humanism or, conversely, abolish humanism because of its racio-colonial baggage" (Weheliye 25) and she provides her own account of how humans are "storytellingly chartered"(Wynter 28) beings that can create transcosmogonic narratives that expand the hegemonic we-referent of coloniality and articulate accounts of the human that are no longer shackled to the monohumanist (66) accounts that hold a discursive and institutional monopoly over humanity.[6] Remembering what is at stake in the colonial definition of Man and the actual human species over and beyond it will allow us to return to the ontological question of the human in our discussions of Fanon, Bhabha, and Said.

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[6] It is worth citing in full the definition that Katherine McKittrick, the radical geographer and author of the important *Demonic Grounds*, gives of Wynter's project: "The intellectual project of Sylvia Wynter is a vast rethinking of the ways in which the human is constituted. Wynter's research draws attention to how the sociospatial expressions of Western modernity - colonial encounters during and after the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Copernican leap and the ascent of astronomy, physics, and physical geography, the secularization of Man and his human others within a Judeo-Christian setting, territorial expansion and transatlantic slavery, industrialization, the rise of the biological sciences - accumulated and formed overlapping governing codes (Man1 and Man2) as overrepresentations of the human. These governing codes produced racialized/non-European/nonwhite/New World/Indigenous/African peoples as first, fallen untrue Christians (in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and, later, as biologically defective and damned (in the nineteenth century)" (143).

FANON: BEING AND KNOWING AGAINST AND BEYOND COLONIALISM

With an emphasis on the interlinked nature of colonial epistemologies and ontologies in mind, we are able to read Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* in a manner that opens up space to analyze some of the shortcomings of discourse analysis style readings of Fanon initiated in large part by Bhabha, and also as a radical gesture towards grasping the lived historical experience of a victim of colonialism. Published in 1952, this difficult to categorize work of philosophical, political, psychiatric, historical, and autobiographical thought is a foundational classic of ethnic studies, critical race theory, and postcolonial studies among other areas that gives voice to the need for the creation of a new subjectivity beyond the violently imposed limitations of the colonial situation. Fanon declares that "in the world I am heading for, I am endlessly creating myself" (204), and stretches Marxism, psychoanalysis, and existential-phenomenology beyond their European roots in order to describe what is at stake in the individual subject's creative resistance to colonialism, and the radical shift to relational ontology that needs to occur for people to transcend the brutality of colonialism.

Though this account of the colonized subject is Fanon's earliest publication, it already shows traces of a radically contextualized and historicizing humanism in its discussion of the black man's attempt to find stable meaning in a racist colonial world that dehumanizes him at every turn. Fanon shows that the classical existential-phenomenological account of subject formation is insufficient for making sense of the

uneven power dynamic that maintains in intersubjective relations in a colonial context. In the Sartrean account, a subject perceives "the Look" of an Other and in so doing learns that they exist in an external way for others such that their being is not merely a matter of individual choice. This is part of the process of subject formation when the subject learns of its own facticity through the experience of intersubjectivity in which subjects intermittently objectivize one another as parts of their projects, and are in turn objectivized as well (259-261). Fanon points out, however, that the colonized subject is not allowed to experience their body in the same way that white people are (Gordon 57). For the subject looked at by someone with whom they have a colonial dynamic, this intersubjective experience is saturated with histories and discourses of racism. When "the Look" happens in a racist colonial situation, it is far more violent and the objectivization far more stark and one-sided, as Fanon recalls being commented upon by a small white child who was afraid of him (89). Fanon refers to all the baggage that the encounter entails in the colonial situation, and says "the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories" (91) casts the totality of racist assumptions about black people onto Fanon's black skin. He has to deal with a degree of facticity that Sartre's formulation does not account for. The weight of this colonial facticity destroys Fanon's project for finding meaning. "I came into this world anxious to uncover the meaning of things, my soul desirous to be at the origin of the world, and here I am an object among other objects" (89). The standard phenomenological terms for intersubjectivity are insufficient to the context in which the colonized individual is considered a subhuman object. In other words, Fanon has historicized and politicized the

account of subject formation that has been erroneously presumed to stand on neutral ground.

Fanon's engagement with insufficiently nuanced Hegelian-Marxist dialectic helps elaborate his point about the relationship between the individual subject's relationship to history under colonialism, and how the struggle against coloniality is therefore the project to reinstate the colonized individual's agency as a causal factor in history. At one point, Fanon criticizes Sartre's preface "Black Orpheus," written for Leopold Senghor's collection of negritude poetry, for reducing an important moment in his own subject formation as a black man into merely a stage on the dialectical path towards postracial communism. Sartre notoriously described negritude poetry as "anti-racist racism" and rather paternalistically situated this as the antithesis to the colonial racism against which it would form the higher synthesis of world in which black and white working class members were indistinguishable from one another (Lee 15). Fanon says that Sartre "destroyed black impulsiveness" (113) through this gesture, and indeed we find the narrator weeping at the end of this chapter from the semantic violence committed against him. Fanon's critique of Sartre is complex, but in contextualizing it against Sartre's own philosophy, we find Fanon making a move against reductive systematizing (Prabhu 140) analogous to the very one Sartre would later attribute to Kierkegaard against the systematization of Hegel! In Sartre's later engagement with Kierkegaard in "Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal," he describes the anguish that Kierkegaard felt at having his place as an individual already picked out beforehand in Hegel's dialectical understanding of history. For Sartre, Kierkegaard rebelled against being reduced to

purely external/abstract knowledge, and in doing so expressed the "singular universal"[7] nature of the historical human subject (161). In "Black Orpheus," however, Sartre reductively systematizes in a vulgar mode of Hegelianism indeed. It is not so much that Fanon finds this account to be completely false, but that the result of revolutionary black consciousness should be predicted ahead of times so simplistically by a European philosopher robs Fanon and other black subjects of their own agential relationship to history.[8] From this comparison, we can illuminate and reformulate Fanon's quarrel with reductive forms of the dialectic to suggest that as an individual, he himself is a historical absolute. He is a human subject who is intimately connected to the structural and historical contexts in which he finds himself, but his specific individuality cannot be reduced to these contexts. Though there are forms of cultural knowledge that can be

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[7] The full quote, which employs the important term "historiality" that I do not explicitly use in my analysis, but that informs my discussion of the relationship between the colonized subject and history, is "Each of us, in our very historicity, escapes History to the extent that we make it. I myself am historical to the extent that others also make history and make me, but I am a transhistorical absolute by virtue of what I make of what they make of me, have made of me and will make of me in the future - that is, by virtue of my historiality"(24). Because Sartre sees the action which forms subjectivity as taking account of the specific contexts that one finds oneself in, he suggests that the act of subjectivity is the act of temporalization. Based on this point, Sartre makes his weighty claim that Kierkegaard escapes history because he is historical. Understanding that Kierkegaard rests upon the margins of knowledge is heuristically helpful in understanding that human subjectivity transcends what can be totally and systematically known. In a way that anticipates Derrida's discussion of the supplement, and Lyotard's idea of the differend, this Sartrean Kierkegaard becomes a symbol pointing towards the trans-historical and trans-semiotic nature of human freedom.

[8] The Kierkegaard connection has a deeper level as well. As Gordon points out "...the use of humor and the scale of metatextual critique - of the unusual relationship between of the author to his own text - is what differentiates Fanon's work as something unseen before. Here one could even think of European existentialists such as Soren Kierkegaard, who used techniques of what he called 'indirection,' and Friedrich Nietzsche, who claimed to have been breaking idols, whose ideas and approaches also appear in *Black Skin, White Masks*"(166).

applied on a broader scale, there is a certain irreducible sense in which some knowledge can only be experienced singularly (Prabhu 133). We can refine our theorizing up to this point through posting a connection between Wynter's humanity behind the concept of Man, and the Sartrean idea of the singular absolute. Colonialism denies that the colonized subject is the singular absolute, whereas Fanon's struggle against the colonial situation illustrates that indeed the colonizers are active interpreters and agents of history.

Fanon argues for the need to move from a purely abstract epistemological encounter towards the situation where true ethical encounters can occur in conjunction with a deeper and more valid form of rationality. His project calls for escaping the colonial dynamic wherein he is simply interpelated an object by coming to the material/structural/historical contexts in which the existential process of creative self-formation is actually allowed to take place. He says his ethical case against the colonial situation is that he has "the right to demand human behavior from the other human" and that "I show solidarity with humanity provided I can go one step further" (204). Going beyond the ontological and epistemological situation of colonialy structured human interrelatedness is the only way in which humans can really meet, and the only way that the realm of the ethical can even arise (Gordon 69). At the very end of his conclusion, he says "I, a man of color, want but one thing: May man never be instrumentalized. May the subjugation of man by man—that is to say, of me by another—cease. May I be allowed to discover and desire man wherever he may be" (206). Beyond colonial formulations lie the flesh and blood humans that desire to experience one another on equal grounds as humans. Lastly, he directs his call to a perpetually opening and dynamic definition of the human: "My final prayer: O my body, always make me a man who questions!" (206) and

in this phrase, links ontological and epistemological openness to the same overall project. He will later flesh out this project even more in his account of the decolonial struggle in Algeria.

A Dying Colonialism was published in 1959, and though not as well-known as *Black Skin, White Masks*, or the later *The Wretched of the Earth*, is perhaps Fanon's most concrete and specific study of the colonial situation and the struggle for a new humanity beyond it. This account of the last years of the Algerian war against French colonialism contains important examples of the radical human potential to counter and transcend the contexts, and in so doing giving the lie to reductive colonial discourses. Later on, I will refer back to Fanon's thinking here to challenge Bhabha's idea that colonial discourses break under their own weight through pointing out how Fanon's account reveals how colonial discourses in fact break because the colonized actively resist and break them. The preface to this work declares that "men change at the same time that they change the world,"(30) which, notice, repeats the idea about the colonized subject "endlessly creating" himself as found in *BSWM* but expands it to include the interplay with the surrounding lifeworld as well. Likewise, it is here in *A Dying Colonialism* that Fanon extends his ideas about anticolonial ontologies and epistemologies to show that resistance to colonialism is a resistance to the rigid and oppressive colonial idea of the human.

In the first chapter of this work, "Algeria Unveiled", Fanon argues that the colonized reinterpret their own cultural symbols in a way that responds to the colonial situation, and in a way that the colonizer has a difficult time anticipating. Colonial forces depend on the knowledge that French sociologists had constructed in order to make sense of and control the Algerian people. According to this colonial knowledge, Algerian

society was essentially and rigidly matriarchal and could therefore be more easily controlled if the French could "conquer" the Algerian women[9] by "finding" them beneath the veils they wore in much of Algerian society (37-38). The colonizers assumed that the process of seeing the Algerian women more clearly would be isomorphic with controlling them,[10] and that therefore being behind the veil became an affront to French authority. Because they associated the veil with the assumed backwardness and inertness of Algerian culture, the French thought that unveiled Algerian women would then come to symbolize how colonialism had liberated Algerians to be able to take part in civilization. Thus, the affront to French authority was magnified into an affront to French-colonial culture. Fanon points out that in response to the colonial focus on the veil, the colonized themselves see its preservation as a crucial act of resistance against colonialism. The French reaction to this is key to understanding their ignorance of the Algerian ability to respond to their context, for they interpret the Algerian project to preserve their national culture as simply an element of long-standing religious fanaticism (41). In not seeing the Algerian refusal to relinquish the veil as a response to colonial coercion, the colonizer's own role as a cause of the revolutionary effect is completely mystified to them. What is clearly a response to French rule is interpreted as a timeless essentialized irrationalism. Thus, the colonizers effectively bring what they see as Arab fanaticism into being

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[9] There is an extensive engagement of Fanon's thought in relation to feminism, much of which can be accessed in the essays and bibliography gathered in *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms*. Also, various "third world" and women of color feminists have addressed the interlocking yet distinct natures of anticolonial resistance and women's liberation movements (Gordon 101).

[10] cf. Irigaray's account of the scopophilic modus operandi of Western patriarchy in *The Sex that is Not One.*

through their own contingent efforts. Colonial science fails to even live up to its own putative standards of rigorous empiricism and rationality when it is created with the explicit bias of maintaining the colonial situation. Such a science is insufficient to capture the living appropriations and creations that the colonized make out of their specific contexts, and fumbles in front of the abstraction of Man behind which real people creatively resist.

Expecting the colonized to simply correspond to the reductive knowledge that the colonizers presume of them, they are incapable of grasping how the Algerians are able to take stock of their situation and actively struggle to alter it. Continuing in the chapter, Fanon recounts how Algerian women specifically had to overcome the structured inertia of colonial knowledge in order to fight back for liberation. According to Fanon, the image of the colonizer is lodged within the very body of the colonized to the extent that she has been indoctrinated by colonial ideology to see her place in a subjected way, yet she "devalidates" it and transcends it towards resistance. Through the process of resistance, many women become "bearers of complex messages" acting as crucial avenues of communication between different groups of rebels (53). Furthermore, she relearns how to situate her body in relation to how it is coded by the enemy, and in a "dialectic of body and world," she is able to pass by French surveillance and to take part in activities not expected by them (59). Since "colonialism wants everything to come from it" and the colonized are actively producing their own oppositional meanings and actions, "the colonialists are incapable of grasping the motivations of the colonized" (63). Indeed, the colonizer is haunted by the fact that they do not truly know the colonized, and this is partly because the colonized is capable of grasping their situation and going

beyond it in a way that the colonizer cannot even fathom. The epistemological system through which the colonizer expected to locate the colonized is revealed to be inadequate to address to supposed objects of knowledge.

The Algerian appropriation of heretofore-enemy signs and tools is that the French struggle slowly to even comprehend, and have an even harder time quelling. This breakdown of colonial knowledge into anticolonial knowledge is an important aspects of the Algerians' process of redefining themselves. In chapter 2, "This is the Voice of Algeria," Fanon discusses the ways in which the radio and the French language were given new revolutionary meaning by the people of Algeria, and that they became different people as they creatively and radically responded to their contexts. Initially, the process of transmission of information over French radio airwaves was something that the majority of Algerians did not choose to take part in. It was a world of signs that they recognized as not directed towards them, so they did not participate (73). One of the first mistakes that the French made on this front was giving out information about events in relation to the Algerian struggle against the French army in order to try to spread intimidation. Hearing the colonial account of events, some Algerians were made privy to the existence of rebel groups and locations that they hadn't previously been aware of, but they also realized that they needed information of their own if they were to resist French manipulation (75). French discourse on the war therefore did not simply dissolve under its own weight, but was rather actively taken and used against the intentions of the colonizers. After the Algerians began to openly resist through the avenue of radios, the French discourse was not able to stand on its own. In this new context of constant contestation from the narratives of the Algerians themselves, the colonial discourse

"avowed its own uneasiness" and was more easily detectable as a contingent production of the colonial project of maintaining power (76).

Algerians increasingly began to get more radios, and some began transmissions to spread information about the revolutionary war from the Algerian perspective. The airwaves were jammed by French forces in such a way that only fragments of information came through. Out of these fragments, the Algerian listeners crafted their own complete narratives, taking the pieces available to them and creating "epics of liberation" that projected the desire to revolutionary victory into narrative (86, 89). The Algerians broadcast news to one another not through Arabic or any of the other native languages of Algeria, but in the very language of the colonizers. In a sense, they liberated the enemy language and made it serve the project of anticolonial liberation against its own previous masters (90). The colonizer in this context finds not merely a voice echoed back strangely at him, but a completely different and inimical voice countering his project with its own. Instead of appreciating the innovative ways in which the Algerian has grasped the French language against the colonial project, however, the colonizer can only remark that this reveals the inertia and uselessness of the Arabic language. Even the blatant capability of the Algerians to resist is interpreted as an obvious sign of their essential inertia (91). With a heightened network of communication, the revolutionary anticolonial forces continue to gain considerable victories against the French. As Fanon says, "words shape the world," (95) and new narrative interpretations of Algeria arise to shape the area in new ways. Indeed, the establishment of what one scholar has termed "wireless democracy" was the Algerians hard-fought articulation of new narratives of relations amongst themselves and the land in the emergent form of a new democratic society (Gibson 57). In keeping with

Wynter's description of colonialism as the "corporatization of zones" in which spaces are interpreted as indicative of the essential natures of the bodies that inhabit them (Ansfield 130), the active anticolonial struggle of the Algerians gives the lie to the essentialism that had been foisted onto their land and onto their bodies through showing that they are the storytelling creators of themselves and their relationship with their own spatial contexts. To appropriate the discourse of the colonizer is to forcefully declare that one is human, and as signifying beings, humans create history. The strategic uses of radio and French helped the Algerians recreate the world and themselves in such a way as to challenge the colonial system of power.

The complex relationship between newness and historical context linked to the process of articulating a humanity beyond colonialism comes into play clearly in Fanon's discussion of the adaptations in Algerian family dynamics that occurred during the anticolonial revolution in chapter 3, "The Algerian Family." Against the layers of repression that she faces, the female Algerian subject reshapes herself and creates a new subjectivity as well as a new shape to the material world around her. Fanon argues that the woman in Algerian society responds to the colonial context with a creative resistance, and that "She literally forged a new place for herself by her sheer strength" (109). In this case, she was neither granted freedom by the patriarchal elements of Algerian society, nor did she simply appropriate liberal European concepts of individual agency as liberal apologists for Western imperialism argue even to this day in narratives of Western feminism needing to "rescue"[11] Middle Eastern women from their supposed

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[11] As for the patriarchal elements in Algerian society, "As the Algerian feminist writer Assia Djebar has argued, alongside the 'progressive enclosing of outside space,' which began with the colonial intrusion, came 'a progressively silent freezing of internal

"backwardness." This radical gesture of freedom reshaped the world into a form that was theretofore nonexistent. In a radically new context, the Algerian woman's creativity leads to the world being shaped in a new and different way. The human is that which cannot be reduced to its place in knowledge discourses or history, but transcends these in such a way as to refashion them (Gibson 52). This eruption of new human freedom into the world accompanies a radical shift in human ontology as well as the epistemological ways in which human subjects discern themselves and the places around them. Through the force of their thinking actions, the Algerians illustrate the bankruptcy of the colonial definition of Man and the oppressive and violent situation that undergirds it.

Fanon gathers the threads found in his previous works that address the need to go beyond colonial modes of being and knowing in a call to definitively articulate the human in a way that breaks and abandons the structures of coloniality in his last book, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Published in 1961, and certainly both his most controversial yet influential work, this text is the culmination of Fanon's attempts to use various strands of thought and analysis to understand the anticolonial struggles to which he himself dedicated so much effort. After having covered such topics as the place of violence in

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communication . . . between the sexes.' In the twentieth century, as native society was dispossessed of its lands, its 'tribal structures began to turn inward [and] close in on itself.' Women were 'doubly imprisoned.' The constriction of space was manifested in the tightening of relations within the family. Often it meant disinheriting women in favor of men" (Gibson 50). So we are already on the complex ground that even those elements of Algerian patriarchy were certainly aggravated by the colonial situation. This has been lost on generations of commentators that have used the language of feminism as an apology for imperialist aggression, such as recently the liberal feminist justifications for the US invasion of Afghanistan in order to "liberate" the women there. For more contemporary narratives of Western imperialist feminism in relation to Islam in particular, cf. "Imperialist Feminism and Liberalism" by Deepa Kumar, which describes and critiques these impulses.

anticolonial revolution, the strengths and weaknesses of both spontaneity and nationalist organizations, and the importance of not allowing revolutionary consciousness ossify into repressive versions of the postcolonial state, he declares that to truly recover from the panoply of traumas wrought against the colonized, it is not enough to merely cast off the governmental shell of colonial rule. As to the direction that people should take after kicking the European rulers out of their countries, he says, "Let us decide not to imitate Europe and let us tense our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us endeavor to invent man in full, something which Europe has been incapable of achieving" (236). Part of the grotesque European heritage that must be resisted is that the reality of the human has been "replaced by words"(237), that living human beings have been covered up in dead colonial narratives. Europeans (and their monstrous neo-colonial children, North Americans) see only the violently constructed abstractions that they have engendered in order to keep their power intact, but narcissistically assume that these abstractions are proof of their own objective superiority. The new humanism is not merely dead abstraction, but includes contextualized praxis as well (Bernasconi 115). Furthermore, this new anticolonial humanism is not to the benefit of the victims of colonialism alone, but for all of humanity (239). Thus, Fanon calls for a humanism that breaks through the artificial boundaries that violently divide the human species. This is not the liberal pollyanna postrace utopianism that declares that colonialism will be solved through the pretense of colorblindness, but rather a call to rigorously think and act through the results of colonialism in order to philosophically and materially destroy them. In my following treatments of Bhabha and Said, I will expand upon how this anticolonial humanism

shows that behind the linguistic and epistemological concerns of discourse analysis lies the articulations of a new human mode of being beyond the structures of colonialism.

THE HUMAN HAUNTING BHABHA'S DISCOURSE

In contrast to my reading of Fanon as outlined above, Homi Bhabha, in the essay "Interrogating Identity" in his seminal *Location of Culture*, is to a great extent responsible for the discourse analysis reading of Fanonian thinking. The interpretation of *Black Skin, White Masks* in particular is insufficiently attuned to the importance of the historical situation of colonialism to see the diachronic contexts of Fanon's theorizing, and collapses his account into a synchronic negotiation of identity rather than a struggle against the conditions of colonialism themselves (Prabhu 125). These hermeneutic insufficiencies in Bhabha's account in large part manifest themselves on the sustained focus that he places on ambivalence and undecidability. I argue that Bhabha not only does not see the full implications of Fanon's existential-phenomenological and historico-political methods of theorizing, but when he does see them for what they are, he does not adequately appreciate their value.

One of the central issues in Bhabha's reading is that it misses the specifics of how Fanon contextualizes his thought. Certainly, Bhabha is correct to point out that under colonial conditions and resistance to them, social and psychic representations of Man are disturbed (59); however, his account remains immobilized at the level of psychological and linguistic disturbance. The assertion that Fanon is "not posing the ontological question" (61) prevents Bhabha from seeing how close his own account is to venturing into the realm of human ontology. Indeed, taken by itself, the idea of a disturbance in the

"psychic representation of Man" sounds quite Wynterian, as does his suggestion that "the encounter with identity exceeds the frame of the image," (71) but Bhabha does not concretely link these insights to human beings struggling behind knowledge discourses that they are not reducible to.[12] Therefore, his account of how people attempt to fix cultural difference into visible objects (72) could be put to insightful use as to how perceived culture is naturalized under colonialism, but his account remains at the level of the decontextualized reader attempting to fix cultural codes in a comprehensible way.

Because Bhabha does not fully appreciate how Fanon has transcended and radicalized phenomenology, he occludes from his account the corporeal and material elements that lurk behind his discourse. His penchant for finding semiotic ambivalence in Fanon leads him to bring up the Lacanian gaze (80) without any mention of the existential-phenomenological account of the Look that we discussed above. There are certain elements of Fanon's project that cannot be occluded, however, and to these, Bhabha claims that Fanon strays from his own best insights. Bhabha's take on Fanon's call for liberation, for instance, is that it is un-nuanced and fundamentally linked with nostalgia (76). This is quite a haphazard reading, however, when Fanon explicitly places his call for liberation with warnings against the potential lapse into a mystified nostalgia for the past. In a remarkable passage, Bhabha suggests that

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[12] Bhabha also speaks of liminality, but in his account, this is related to epistemological concerns and not ontology. Furthermore, Bhabha's understanding of the textuality of identity (77) contains a great deal of valuable theorizing, but the manner of textuality of which he speaks is limited to the aporetic poststructuralist play of signifiers. Textuality as understood in a more Wynterian vein points towards narrative openness and a creativity that is irreducible to any single discourse, rather than the synchronic ambivalence and indeterminacy of Bhabha's account.

> Restoring the dream to its proper political time and cultural space can, at times, blunt the edge of Fanon's brilliant illustrations of the complexity of the psychic projections in the pathological colonial relation. (86)

In other words, Fanon's nuanced theorizing is spoiled when he historicizes and politicizes its implications. Of course the interplay of signs is more baroque when not linked to a specific context we might protest, but Bhabha goes on to say of Fanon's concluding wish to enter into authentic intersubjective relations with others that

> It is as if the question of desire that emerged from the traumatic tradition of the oppressed has to be modified, at the end...to make way for an existentialist humanism that is as banal as it is beatific. (87)

Bhabha sees Fanon's call for an opening of the boundaries of the human as nothing but a silly deviation from his psychoanalytic theorizing. Remembering, however, that Fanon declares that liberation from alienation only comes when material conditions are set right, and that since the existential plight of the colonized individual is in large part the epidermalization of economic injustice, the solution lies in overcoming the colonial situation (xv). Bhabha's reading of Fanon remains trapped in those colonial conditions[13] that remain in large part unthought in his discourse analysis account.

Bhabha does seem much more appreciative of the phenomenological and political aspects of Fanon's work in his foreword to *The Wretched of the Earth*, however, indicating that there are elements of his thought that engagement with Fanonian humanism can deepen and improve upon. He says that Fanon's thinking allows us to think a genealogy of globalization (xv) that traces settler colonial Manichaeism to the

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[13] Furthermore, taking into account Bhabha's argument that colonialism collapses temporality and spatiality, his temporality-phobic take on Fanon thus chides him for thinking outside of the mutilated sense of spatiality and temporality that colonialism imposes.

globalized dual economy of our times (xii). His argument that Fanon offers a way of finding a "new humanity" past the limitations and parameters of the cold war (xvii) is quite suggestive. Here he opens up space to think of the human as that which does not correspond exactly to any of the major political narratives that surround it. Surprisingly, we find Bhabha saying that one of the values of Fanon's text is that it provides a way to go beyond "the politics of identity, and the politics of recognition" (xviii). The colonial gaze is insufficient to define the lived reality of the colonized. This already goes beyond the discursive account in *Location of Culture* that I discuss below to gesture towards a more human realm of the material struggle. As opposed to the Bhabha that occludes the phenomenological aspects of Fanon's work in *Black Skin, White Masks*, this iteration argues for the value of the "phenomenological approach to colonialism" (xxii) and even ties this in with the issue of agency (xix). Though he says he disagrees with Hannah Arendt's reading that Fanon presents a teleological prophecy that violence will usher in a new era of humanity,[14] his own reading seems infected by this obsession with violence,

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[14] Arendt's reading in *On Violence* remains the standard liberal mythification and reduction of Fanon to a "prophet of violence," propelling confused and angst-ridden youngsters to react violently instead of critically to their situations. Leaving aside the racist discourses that invariably couch antiracist projects as simple irrational overflows of emotions, this reading rests on an interpretation of Fanon that, as Gordon points out, leaves one wondering if the critics have even read the Fanon's work itself or have just looked at decontextualized quotes (10). This mindset today is represented by a liberal political scholar and Africanist such as Alex de Waal, who asserts that Fanon's work is "often opaque and his methodology confused" and that this leads to him being appropriated in such radically different contexts (29). That Hutu nationalists made use of some passages in their genocidal violence in Rwanda is for De Waal a clear smoking gun that Fanon's thought is irresponsible and dangerous (incidentally leftists and antiimperialists are currently familiar with this kind of thinking in attempts to discredit Noam Chomsky's critiques of American imperialism through pointing out that his work was quoted by Osama Bin Laden). Critics who dogmatically call for pacifism and nonviolence on the part of the marginalized naturalize colonial violence through

leading to some passages sounding as though he needs to rescue Fanon's unwieldy account from going over into the edge. That being said, Bhabha does preserve a rather compelling kernel of Fanon's thoughts on knowledge and choice, however, and his reading repeatedly returns to Fanon's idea that "Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity." His interpretation is that the political urgencies of our contexts must be attended to even though we are forced to choose without pregiven knowledge (xvi), an account that of course is strikingly similar to the existentialist formulation of responsibility so prevalent throughout Fanon. I will now show how elements of Fanonian thought at the peripheries of Bhabha's account of Fanon himself can be used to stretch out other important areas of Bhabha's oeuvre.

Bhabha provides a compelling account of the fissures in colonial discourse and their relation to epistemology, but one that needs to be deepened according to the embodied agency of the colonized. In "Signs Taken for Wonders" in his *Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that the colonizer's discourse of universality ends up being haunted by the contingency of the colonial situation, and that the place of enunciation of colonial discourse reveals that it is itself not transcendent and unmediated, but a contingent assertion of power. At one point, he describes the result of trying to force certain people and discourses into the colonial grid of knowledge as "the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire" (Bhabha

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presenting anticolonial resistance as somehow arising from a vacuum and not responding to the brutalities of the colonial situation. Furthermore, that Fanon's nuanced critique of the dangers of revolutionary thinking devolving into oppressive brutality is actually a useful tool in critiquing the rise of Hutu Power in Rwanda is completely lost on those who would want to lump violence against the colonial geopolitical status quo with all violence whatsoever.

160). In other words, there are spaces and events that reveal that colonial discourse is a contingent product of colonial desire rather than an unmediated fount of universal truth. He argues this through pointing out the ways in which the original British missionaries in India were troubled by questions that local people asked about the relationship of Christian theology to certain aspects of Indian traditions. In this context, the colonizers quickly lose patience for what they consider to be the constant calling into question of themselves and the Bible as immediate sources of authority. Through the "strange questions" that the locals put to the missionaries about the connections between Christian rites and cannibalism, the colonizers begin to become worried that the status of what they have taught to the colonized has not been accepted as the pure truth in the way that was hoped (166-168). At that very point of trying to convince the Indian questioners of the pure veracity of the colonial knowledge of Christianity, the missionaries perform the very fact that their authority must be contingently stated and brought into being through their own rhetorical efforts. Thus, putatively universalist colonial discourse is haunted by the fact that it fails to live up to its own standards, and ends up buckling under its own weight to show areas of fissure and indeterminacy. For Bhabha, the new understanding of Christianity in parts of India that has resulted from failure of the colonial discourse of the transcendentally true nature of Christian theology suggests that colonial knowledge cannot survive its transplantation to another location without suffering mutations in the process.

Bringing a Fanonian and Wynterian lens to bear on Bhabha's formulation of haunted colonial discourse points out that while Bhabha presents the image of a colonial grid of knowledge that wobbles and cracks under its own impossible weight, he leaves

out how this grid was broken because it covered over humans who did. Our extensive discussion of Fanon's theorizing on the Algerian resistance above provides various examples of how the colonized are not merely passive recipients of colonial structures, but re-appropriate and challenge those structures through their own anticolonial struggles. On this reading, those who put difficult questions to the Christian missionaries weren't just interrogating the book, they were asserting their own system of meaning and enveloping the colonial English sign into their own contexts. This indeed creates ambiguous meaning as Bhabha so well points out, yet also leads to a greater amount of Indian autonomy as the Indians assert their humanity against the dehumanizing forces of colonialism.

Some of the hints at a fuller human ontology that we locate in Bhabha's introduction above can be found in his chapter "How Newness Enters the World," in which he suggests that migratory subjectivity in the contemporary world leads to a subject formation that finds itself situated in the between spaces of different discourses and temporalities in a way analogous to the process of translation. Indeed, his famous theorization of the third space can from a Wynter-Fanonian perspective be stretched in order to articulate how the new postcolonial human defines itself beyond the hegemonic parameters of Man. Bhabha says that for migrant individuals,

> What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, *contingently*, 'opening', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference...It is, if I may stretch a point, an interstitial future, that emerges *in-between* the claims of the past and the needs of the present. (313)

This subjectivity is always shifting its boundaries in a way that cannot be tied down to the past, present, or future, but comes from an ever-changing negotiation of all three. The

new future arises not simply out of connections with what has come before, nor out of a completely synchronic relationship with the present. Bhabha says that

> To dream not of the past or present, nor the continuous present; it is not the nostalgic dream of tradition, nor the Utopian dream of modern progress; it is the dream of translation as 'survival' as Derrida translate the 'time' of Benjamin's concept of of the afterlife of translation, as *sur-vivre*, the act of living on the borderlines. (324)

What is left over after all the knowledge discourses have been exhausted is the human species that was never reducible to any of them. Humans are linguistic and narrative beings, and in order to have somewhat valid knowledge of them, that knowledge must itself be of a narrative nature that mirrors its object. This anticolonial humanism can be described well by how Bhabha says that

> The 'newness' of migrant or minority discourse has to be discovered *in medias res*: a newness that is not part of the 'progressivist' division between past and present, or the archaic and the modern; nor is it a 'newness' that can be contained in the mimesis of 'original and copy.' (325)

Furthermore,

> The foreign element 'destroys the original's structures of reference and sense communication as well' not simply by negating it but by negotiating the disjunction in which successive cultural temporalities are 'preserved in the work of history and at the same time cancelled.' (326)

The humanism that we have begun to speak of in terms of Fanon, and which we will now discuss in terms of Said, does not merely stem from past European humanisms, but in its anticolonial positioning, destroys the past structures of humanism in order to open space for thinking the human species on new ground. This posited new humanity ends up looking strikingly similar to Fanon's in *Black Skin, White Masks* of which Bhabha has ironically been so dismissive.

SAID: FROM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TO ANTICOLONIAL HUMANISM

According to many accounts, the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 inaugurates the academic field of postcolonial studies as understood today. Whatever the case, this text is certainly foundational to discourse studies specifically, and so while Bhabha is at the root of the discourse analysis interpretation of Fanon specifically, Said is at the root of discourse analysis more generally. I look briefly at *Orientalism* as making somewhat similar moves to Bhabha's "Signs Taken for Wonders" discussed above in terms of a focus on linguistics and epistemology that needs to be stretched and deepened through ontology and ethics, before showing how in his later more historico-political work as well as his move towards humanism that his project overlaps with Wynter and Fanon's but in a uniquely epistemologically inflected way. Indeed, the new humanism that grows out of Said's paradoxical repudiation of much of the discourse analysis methods that he himself help found provides another good means by which to bring such analysis into deeper dialogue with Wynterian and Fanonian modes of humanism.

For the Said of *Orientalism*, Western knowledge production concerning "the East" is intimately interlinked with the process of Western domination. Hearkening to Foucault's idea that knowledge discourses are imbricated in the power structures that give rise to them (3), Said argues that Western forces have created a purely abstract notion of "the Orient" that corresponds to its own colonial desires. It is not the case, as

many of his harsher critics have asserted, that Said simply presents Eastern identities as mere projections of Western knowledge and therefore denies them any agency of their own. The issue is more nuanced than that, for in Said's account, Eastern people certainly have their own histories and truths, but the Western discourses *themselves* have zero relations to these realities. This account, much like that of Bhabha in relation to hybrid discourse above, does not address how Western discourses themselves were shaped by the active resistance against them. Said's account is perhaps even more problematic than Bhabha's in some ways, however, because while Bhabha at least acknowledges the failures of colonial discourse, for Said at times it seems as though they exist in a pristine state away from any blatant shortcomings. This may be a good account of how the colonial apparatus sees itself at any given moment, but is not sufficiently open to what Said would later call the "worldliness" of discourses. Ironically enough, we could say that Said does not yet sufficiently appreciate the Foucauldian maxim that "where there is power, there is resistance" (95) for he for the most part ignores the ways in which Western meaning production for the Middle East were contested from the beginning. Said already agrees with Fanon that Europe has covered the colonized in words, but his account needs to be expanded in relation to the human beings struggling behind and against those words.

Said was attentive to many of the criticisms of *Orientalism* in this regard, and in his *Culture and Imperialism* he moves much more radically in the direction of representing resistance to colonialism as well. His attention to the specificities of anticolonial struggle is part of his nuanced treatment of anticolonial nationalisms, a treatment which is not only analogous to our large discussion of an anticolonial

humanism, but opens up important space for that to happen. In his introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*, Said says that he is aware of some of the shortcomings of his earlier work, and specifically that what he "left out of *Orientalism* was that response to Western dominance which culminated in the great decolonization all across the Third World" (xii), or in other words, he left out the agency of the colonized and the influence it had in resisting the structures of coloniality. The importance of resistant agency comes to play in Said's account of how different modes of nationalism are genealogically related to their European predecessors, yet radically different because undertaken in a far different context. He says that "Debates today about Third World nationalism have been increasing in volume and interest, not least because to many scholars and observers in the West, this reappearance of nationalism revived several anachronistic attitudes" (216), which, for one thing, implicitly repeats the colonial stereotype that European countries exist in the modern sphere of linear time, and that others exist either at an earlier stage on that teleology or have yet to become "historical" at all. This is the very kind of suspicion that Said and Fanon's modes of humanism are met with. Namely, that the appropriation of this term is considered to violate some sort of non-Western essence on their part. Said continues, saying that some of those that are uncomfortable with these new forms of nationalism "consider [it] as a form of political behavior that has been gradually superseded by new[15] transnational realities of modern economies, electronic

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[15] Said's account of the critics who see nationalism as having been superseded by "new transnational realities" is a good point to address the criticisms of Said, Bhabha, and postcolonial theorizing in general as articulated by Hardt and Negri in their hugely influential and controversial *Empire*. Their argument is that the axes of power and difference inaugurated by colonial violence have been completely superseded by global capitalism, and that theorists like Said and Bhabha who focus on the colonial difference perpetuate a manner of fighting against empire which has become hopelessly

communications, and superpower military projection"(216), and that therefore, it is a term and organizational principle that has become outmoded and unable to deal with the complexities of the contemporary world. Said criticizes these views, however, and suggests that in all of them "there is a marked (and, in my opinion, ahistorical) discomfort with non-Western societies acquiring national independence, which is believed to be 'foreign' to their ethos" (216). That colonized peoples were forced to adopt and adapt to Western structures is admitted by these critics, yet that nationalism could mean something new in the new anticolonial context seems to be lost on them. Ironically, in trying to relegate nationalism to a purely historical register, those who stress the rigid importance of history are in fact shutting off their historical narratives from actual political and social dynamics. Only historical knowledge that is sensitive to the realities of anticolonial struggle is adequate as knowledge in the first place.

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anachronistic. Indeed, according to Hardt and Negri, Bhabha and Said's usefulness as theorists is purely historical. What they have obviously missed is not only that capitalism itself has its roots in colonialism, but that the shift from colonialism to neocolonialism contains explanatory depth that would greatly expand and nuance their own account of the global empire of capital. Hardt and Negri focus on the economic aspects of the modern geopolitical world to the detriment of the political. Certainly, the globe is chained to the vicious circulation of capital, but it is specifically the Middle-East geographically speaking that is currently being bombed and droned by the Western powers, not the space of the imperial metropolis. And at the center of empire in the United States, it is indigenous and poor communities of color that are constantly terrorized by violence from the police state and the prison industrial complex, not the property-owning white population that more closely adheres to the abstraction that is colonial Man. In placing humanity as a whole as equally under the grid of capitalist exploitation, Hardt and Negri ironically theorize in a way quite similar to those aspects of Bhabha that I criticize above, and in their attempts at locating the violence of economic imperialism repeat its gesture of reducing humanity to simplistic discourse. This does not completely vitiate the value of their work, but part of the problem is that they do not see the roots of the perpetuation of capitalist relations as intimately and ontologically linked with the European concept of Man.

Said's contextual and deeply historical version of humanism defines the human as liminally situated and always within history in a way that helps emphasize and strengthen the epistemological edge of Fanonian humanism when synthesized with it. R. Radhakrishnan's[16] discussion of Said's humanism in his "Edward Said and the Politics of Secular Humanism" is immensely helpful in situating Said's account of humanism within the different theoretical currents to which it is related. The in-betweenness of Saidean humanism in terms of departmental discourses is an analogous entryway into the ontological and epistemological in-betweenness that that very humanism posits, for Said is always up front about how he is talking about a mode of doing work in the humanities that resists the antihumanist currents of much critical theory, yet is not subsumed into traditionalist ideology. An essential aspect of Saidean humanism is his concept of "worldliness," that is, historically and socially engaged theorizing. Said

> [N]ever claims that worldliness is graspable in a direct or unmediated way, either in the name of political rectitude or of epistemological rigor. He is too much of a

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[16] Even with the appreciative reading that Radhakrishnan gives of Said's humanism, from the Wynter-Fanonian perspective, he still misses much of the central importance of Said's gestures towards a more radical account of human ontology. From this perspective, it is certainly neither banal nor tautological (156) that the realm of historicity is opened up to the agency of the human. Radhakrishnan here repeats the same mistake that Bhabha makes in terms of seeing a radical appropriation of humanism as "banal". Even within the context of the chapter, it is puzzling that Radhakrishnan could be so dismissive of this argument when he has spent so much time discussing an antihumanism that accepts as one of its central tenets that human agency as such is indeed not a causal agent in the creation of history. To even speak of history in creative terms cuts against the way it is understood on a broader poststructuralist level. Indeed, the obviousness falls away when we consider that it is not positioned as a regress from poststructuralism but rather a going beyond what it has established. Against a putatively universalist colonial discourse on Man that placed the colonized as nonagential passive recipients of history, Said's antiEurocentric humanism opens up space to think through the potential of history told against colonization, of a fluid definition of the human that thinks of humanity in more liberatory and organic terms.

> nuanced aesthete of language to allow that: instead he renders language accountable to the outside. (131)

Against the possible poststructuralist critique that Said has merely reified a pre-theoretical access to the socio-historical world, he in fact never posits his humanistic approach as extricable from the web of language, but nevertheless maintains that immediate concerns of the political must always be brought to bear on the process. This approach earned Said the criticism of both the classic humanists in the tradition of Erich Auerbach and Matthew Arnold, the "pure theorists" like de Man, and a slew of political thinkers who felt his maintenance of humanism at all was a dangerous holdover from colonial thinking (132). Recognizing that humanism has indeed been a great force for colonial violence throughout history, Said nevertheless appropriates the term as "an omnihistorical state of being human that responds to worldly situations in the name of freedom and justice" (139).[17] Later, Radhakrishnan mentions the

> Saidian possibility of existing simultaneously in multiples worlds, of experiencing windows as mirrors and mirrors as windows, of perennially transcribing any inside space of the outside, and of dwelling in many betweens as homes and as locations. (154-155)

This possibility once again is predicated upon not reifying existing academic narratives of truth production, which is a

> [R]econfiguration of the term, since now the value of humanism is not inherent in disciplinarity or in the specialized discourse of the profession. Humanism is an

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[17] This of course isn't necessarily at odds with some strains of poststructuralism and even reminds one quite a bit of the later Derrida, working within the tradition of Western metaphysics in order to argue for the importance of a democracy always to come on the future horizon, and that such thought depends upon the undeconstructability of justice that must always inform deconstructive readings. For a reading of Said that places his work as a radical continuation of the poststructuralist project, cf. *The Legacy of Edward W. Said*, by William V. Spanos.

> ethico-political stance that tells the intellectual from without how to handle, use, and direct the discourse. (155)

Thus, Saidian humanism valorizes and opens up space for the human agent behind the grids of knowledge, pointing towards how these knowledges can and should be appropriated for existentially valid human contexts. Part of the truth of the non-reduciblity of the human to knowledge discourses is that this openness allows for the "secular production of new truths, values, and realities" in a manner that is not frozen as a mere repetition of what had always already existed (173). Said's project is to "decolonize humanism as Eurocentric fetish" to help think "the potential multeity of humanism: its internally heterogenous interrelatedness" (179). While this may seem to be purely relegated to the realm of scholarly methodology and therefore to be at odds with Fanon's more political humanism, because it is methodologically and ontologically open, not only can Saidean humanism be opened to and combined with Fanon's in order to politicize it, but in Said's formulation itself, we are dealing not merely with an academic discourse but rather with a method of approaching knowing and being in the world in general. As becomes more evident in comparing his work with Wynter's, Said's anticolonial humanism resists its Eurocentric genealogy in order to open up space for the human as dynamic and multiple.

Both Said and Wynter respond to the thought of Césaire in ways that map out and enunciate the contours of an anticolonial humanism in action. Following Césaire's call for an "invention of new souls" beyond the provincialist and exclusivist histories and narratives of the human that colonialism imposes, Said posits a humanism that methodologically refuses closure and also refuses to see human identity as essentially stable and closed off either (312, 315). Likewise, Wynter points to Césaire's argument

that scientific knowledge is “poor and half-starved” in the sense of not being able to capture the uniqueness and irreducibility of human experience, and that therefore, a “science of the word” is needed that is sensitive to the existential and interpretive vicissitudes of human being in the world (Wynter 64). Both of these accounts strike out against the “decadent science” (Gordon 121) of colonial knowledges that remain trapped in narcissistic abstractions rather than relationality with other narratives and the contingencies of lived reality. Knowledge production in the humanities is an important space as long as it remains open, but for both thinkers, there can be no hierarchization of the academic world. This is why both Said and Wynter are not satisfied to relegate their work to any one stand of scholarly categorization, and also why both demand that knowledge production be open to the ontological and ethical elements of human life. Said says of an application of this kind of knowledge production that “This is the literal instance of Marx’s stipulated beginning of human history, and it gives...the dimension of a social community as actual as the history of a people”(281). It is the beginning of a truly human history in the sense that the human has finally begun to escape from the violent strictures of colonial Man. For Wynter, according to a contextually and humanly sensitive form of knowledge, “the human story/history becomes the collective story/history of these multiple forms of self-inscription or self-instituted genres, with each form/genre being adapted to its [ecological and geopolitical] situation,” and that furthermore, the purpose is to arrive at the point of self-reflexivity wherein we recognize the ways in which we are creating our definitions of the human even as we do so. As we gain that level of self-reflexivity the “new object of knowledge is that of our genres of being human, of the governing sociogenic principles in whose symbolically coded and

prescribed terms we inscript and thereby experience ourselves as an *I* and *we*" (Scott and Wynter, 206-207). In other words, we see that epistemology and ontology work together in a hermeneutic circle in which we know that our very modes of articulating the human are isomorphic with our modes for bringing the human into being. The true beginnings of Fanonian humanism are the beginnings of a humanity that no longer thinks itself in terms of the violent colonial situation, but in terms of both being and knowledge thinks itself as tied to context in fluid and dynamic ways.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

Placing Fanon's call for a new humanism in Wynter's terms of knowledge discourses and the human, and bringing it to bear on the discourse analyses of Bhabha and Said, illustrates the ontological potential lying behind their own theorizing, but also gives greater content and extension to our idea of this new anticolonial humanism as well. This leads not to a denial of the importance of discourse, but rather the knowledge that within discourse lies the struggle for a new humanity. We can trace the contours of this anticolonial humanism working within discourse through some of Aimé Césaire's work in *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, his attempt to come to terms with his own subjectivity and history in the face of the colonial reality that surrounded him and his home of Martinique. In one of the most striking lines in the poem, he paradoxically says "Pity for our omniscient and naïve conquerors!" (68) which cuts to the core of the hollow and dead nature of colonial systems of knowing, but is even more striking because followed by the call to situate knowledge contextually in the declaration, "my eyes fixed on this town which I prophesy" inasmuch as he links his entryway into broader currents of his knowledge production to the local and what he himself can experience existentially. We are reminded that he is talking about an individual's link to context and history, not a solipsistic inwardness, in the earlier lines when the narrator mocks the idea of a "beneficent inner revolution" that merely convinces the colonized to make peace with their own oppression (61). Thus, against the illegitimate universalizing of the

contingent and provincial, Césaire's account sets up a hermeneutic circle between a rigorous attention to context in order to work towards provisional modes of universal liberation. Addressing his own being in a way that prefigures Fanon's prayer to his body in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Césaire says "And above all, my body as well as my soul, beware of assuming the sterile attitude of a spectator, for life is not a spectacle, a sea of miseries is not a proscenium, a man screaming is not a dancing bear…" (44). Colonial systems of knowing cast the colonized under a screen of dead knowledge that obstructs the existential process of intersubjective empathy and imagination. The linguistic and narrative human cannot be captured by the death-dealing and dead narratives of colonialism, but struggles against its contexts in a way that leads to new interpretations and new modes of meaning and existing.

Our new understanding of discourse that does not ignore its own connectedness with relational-ontology bears the radical promise of Fanonian humanism. Against and beyond the ossified colonial history of passive colonized figures trapped in the larger structures of colonial knowledge, the human species carries on its struggle of reinventing itself through newly constructed narratives. As Césaire suggests in opposition to colonial knowledges and beings, "What can I do? One must begin somewhere. Begin what? The only thing in the world worth beginning: The End of the world of course" (55). The end of the world of which he speaks is the end of the colonial construction of Man that is not open to existence but is rather a dead web of abstractions. He says further on that he wishes to preserve an understanding of his identity as a black person, yet he has a "tyrannical love" that hopes to begin with the love of his own race in order to be able to have radical love for all races. Césaire suggests that acknowledging and working through

historical suffering can comprise the first steps towards the time when “the soil works for all” (70) and resources are equally distributed among all instead of violently hoarded for a few. Through his poetry, Césaire suggests that through a radical acceptance of the historical and spatial contingency of the lived black experience of an individual on Martinique, he can break through the ossified abstractions of colonialism towards a more human intersubjectivity that recognizes shared intimacies and hopes with humanity as a whole. The human as thought against and beyond the ongoing violent history of colonialism is a gesture towards that situated openness and open-ended contextualization that resists the enslavement of humans to human structures, but rather sees human structures as intimately and relationally tied up with the always changing process of human existence.

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